

**Second Meeting of the Consultative Forum for the Lufthansa Technik Airmotive
Ireland (LTAI) EGF Programme**

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB Tallaght Training Centre, 30 September 2015

Attendance:

Chairperson:	Anna Lee
EGF Managing Authority (EGFMA):	Mary McGarry, John McDermott, Pdraig Creed
SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit (EGFCU):	David Smith, Joanne Morrissey, Therese Kirwan, Siobhan Gill
Department of Social Protection:	Fiona Ward
South Dublin LEO:	Ena Coleman
Enterprise Ireland	Gerry O'Grady
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB:	Deirdre McKeon
LTAI worker representatives:	Willie Lanigan, Daniel Donohue, Mick Taylor,
PWA worker representative	Tony O'Reilly
Young NEET Persons ¹ :	Fiona Doyle

Apologies:

Higher Education Authority:	David Sheils
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1. The Chairperson welcomed those present and round-table introductions were made. Mr. Mick Taylor was a new member of the LTAI worker representatives and Mr. Tony O'Reilly, was attending as a representative for the workers made redundant at PWA International in Rathcoole, another aircraft MRO company, for whose 108 workforce an EGF application was submitted by the Department of Education and Skills in June 2015. Mr. McDermott proposed that when approved the PWAI EGF programme would be included in the forum given the sectoral, geographical and cohort similarities. There were no objections to this proposal.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting of 11 June 2015 were approved subject to one change as requested by Ms. Ward to an action point at paragraph 6.
3. Mr. McDermott gave an update on the PWAI application, explaining that for technical timing reasons, it had not been possible to include both workforces (LTAI and PWAI) in a single sectoral application for EU approval. A decision on the EGF application submitted in June in support of 108 PWAI workers and 108 NEET persons was expected in November 2015 from the European Commission. The approval of the European Council of Ministers and the European Parliament will also subsequently be required. In the meantime, EGF type programme supports were being offered to the PWAI workers in anticipation of application approval.
4. Mr. McDermott presented the headline figures from the second LTAI implementation report dated 28 September 2015 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. EGF programme participation data to the end of August 2015 included:

¹ Young Person Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

- 193 LTAI workers had benefitted from programme supports, of which the EGF training grant Career Guidance (73), EGF training grant FETAC (145) and Course Expense Contribution (128),) had been the most popular. 179 had availed of supports provided through the SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit and 14 more had availed of DSP schemes.
 - 76 NEET young persons had availed of programme supports, of which the EGF training grant Career Guidance (43) and DSP Training/Internships (23) had been the most popular. 57 of 111 NEET persons engaging with the SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit had subsequently taken up supports while 19 had availed of DSP schemes.
 - The latest Labour Market Status compiled from Revenue Commissioners and DSP data for the end of August 2015 indicated:
 - The number of affected workers in employment had risen to 256 while the number of unemployed had decreased to 71.
 - An analysis by DES of the affected workers in employment indicated:
 - by Age Band that younger workers aged 20-24 had the highest re-employment rate while those in the 40-44 years cohort had the highest unemployment rate.
 - by Occupation that both clerical and professional categories had the highest re-employment rates and technicians had the lowest rates
 - by Highest Educational level attained that there were higher re-employment rates for Level 2 Primary Education and Level 8 Degree holders than Level 4/5 Leaving Certificate and Level 9 Masters Degree holders.
 - The number of NEET young persons in employment had risen to 48 while the number of unemployed had dropped from to 105.
5. A discussion on the report contents and implications ensued. The relatively high number of 88 LTAI workers whose labour market status was unknown was highlighted. While acknowledging that there is a group of some 20 workers who are understood not to wish to engage, Mr. Lanigan suggested that some may have retired while a number of others had anecdotally emigrated to places such as Norway, Switzerland and China. Others may have exhausted their social welfare entitlement. It was agreed that any further analysis possible would be useful and DES will seek to undertake same with assistance from relevant stakeholders.
6. While 193 LTAI workers had been assisted, the EGFCU confirmed that it had engaged with 266 workers and thus it was hoped that some of the 73 who had not yet taken up any supports may still do so. It was felt that most LTAI workers were seeking preferably re-employment in the first instance rather than education or training.
7. It was felt by some that the optimum timing of notification of EGF programme supports may be impacting on measure take-up rates. Workers had been notified of potential EGF supports upon redundancy and subsequently on a number of occasions including invitations to an Open Day and one to one engagements. However, it may be that in some

cases a period of time needed to elapse before the reality of redundancy forced workers to actively consider other career options, or they were too busy actively seeking early re-employment to engage fully with the EGF process. Mr. McDermott pointed out that the employment rate of LTAI workers at approximately the mid-point of the programme was at 60.3% already well ahead of the EU average of 49% cited in a recent European Commission evaluation of the EGF. It was felt that possibly another important point at which to re-contact significant numbers of potential EGF beneficiaries could be when their initial 9 months period Seekers Benefit was exhausted.

8. In response to a question from Ms. McGarry as to whether there were any gaps in the provision of EGF supports, Mr. Lanigan suggested that general information on pension entitlements would be useful.
9. The meeting then focused on the low uptake of EGF programme supports by the NEETs cohort, and how take-up rates might be improved.

To date over 300 NEET persons have been contacted by the SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit Managing Authority Contributions but only 57 persons have taken up supports with another 19 exclusively on DSP schemes.

Ms. Ward outlined that there are difficulties in engaging with young unemployed clients

Ms. McKeon stated that while it the recent announcement of new apprenticeships was welcome, many were now being held up as contracts had not been signed, particularly in construction trades which might traditionally have absorbed some of the current NEET cohort. She confirmed that all under 25s were eligible for all courses and that Facebook had been a useful tool in promoting courses. However, it was difficult to reach those most distant from work and motivation, local rivalries and drugs issues were amongst the obstacles being encountered.

The Chairperson sought the views of Ms. Doyle as a NEET person who had recently taken up an EGF support. Ms. Doyle felt that many State officials and private employers did not fully understand the needs of young people. Prospective employers, she said, sought experience so it was a Catch 22 situation for those aged 18, 19 etc to enter the labour market without such experience. Information provided by public bodies tended to point school-leavers towards either full-time higher education or employment, which did not recognize the multitude of part-time employment and training/education options in society.

Ms. McKeon also highlighted the work placements elements of ETB courses and felt that despite a focus in recent years on higher education (currently 60% school leaver participation), many jobs do not necessarily require third level qualifications and further education and training (FET) were viable alternative options. Sports-related courses and the EGF Mindfulness programme might usefully be offered to NEET cohorts were other suggestions from the floor.

Given that some people from both worker and NEET cohorts had at least initially greeted EGF offers of support with scepticism, the Chairperson underlined that trust in the

veracity of the information received was a key factor, which bodies involved in service provision should not underestimate.

Mr. Taylor felt that greater feedback might increase participation rates. Ms. Morrissey confirmed that course completion questionnaires had issued to all participants and that there were being reviewed at present. Mr. McDermott confirmed that surveys had been conducted on some previous EGF programmes and would be considered again for the LTAI programme.

There was consensus on the value of the *Dealing with Change, Challenge and Opportunity Mindfully* guidance programme in initially engaging workers. Ms. McKeon suggested that a video blog of a current group of participants could be produced and uploaded to the internet: this could spur other hitherto unengaged eligible clients to avail of this and/or other supports. Mr. O'Reilly felt that the programme should be made available to the PWAI cohort while Ms. Doyle felt that it should also be offered to NEET persons, possibly dispersed among older participants to encourage a more balanced age profile.

Ms. Doyle also suggested getting NEET beneficiaries to promote the merits of EGF programme supports with NEET peers.

10. Ms. Coleman updated the forum on actions provided or planned to date by South Dublin LEO. All 12 LTAI workers and 2 NEETs interested in starting their own business have now engaged with South Dublin LEO. Up to six have availed of mentoring and 4 have been approved for priming grants to the value of €60,000. The others are still considering their options in terms of the tax, social welfare and pension implications of self-employment or where their ambitions may be reducing to pursuing part-time self-employment. Two LEO clients have been referred to Kildare LEO and one to Dublin City LEO. Mr. Donohue said that he found the mentoring elements very useful to date but there were significant time lapses in the process at various stages which could be frustrating.
11. Ms. McKeown said participants were satisfied with the ETB courses on offer and that technical courses such as welding were catered for.
12. The next meeting is proposed provisionally for the third week of January 2016, date to be confirmed at which the highlighted action points will be reported on.